

8-90-10

Species: Anas rubripes  
(Vernacular name)American Black Duck  
(Scientific name)

If you watch birds solely for your own enjoyment, a written description of your observations is unnecessary. But, if you have seen something unusual, and would like to share this with others, a written description is essential. Compilers of regional bird lists must insist that their records be scientifically sound; future bird students--those studying occurrences 50 years from now--must have a written record on which to depend. By providing the verifying written description, you are employing a basic rule of the scientific method.

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We recognize that experienced field observers can provide important and reliable records, if supported by an adequate verifying description. Thus this request is an effort to perpetuate your record by obtaining concrete evidence which may be permanently preserved for examination by others in the future. This procedure is required for every extraordinary observation, irrespective of the observer.

Date (s): 29 March 1990 Time Bird Seen: 7:35 a.m. to 7:50 a.m.Locality: Pueblo; Pueblo County  
near city Park along the Arkansas River  
Nearest town, county and state:Optical equipment: Nikon 9x30 binoc's.

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used:

Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: ♂ Plumage: breedingLight conditions: Overcast; light drizzle but fairly good light.Distance from bird, and how measured: 50-100 feet, estimated

Describe the bird's overall behavior:

Flew in to pond from direction of Arkansas R. and descended, landing on water's surface. Preened wings, back & breast with bill & occasionally stretched wings out to afford good views of upper & lower wing & speculum. Preening lasted about 5 minutes. Then the bird swam back & forth in the pond & weakly pursued a female mallard.

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird:

Small man-made pond in a ravine, along a bluff by the Arkansas R.; heavily wooded, in a residential area.

Other observers who independently identified this bird (Please list name and address):

David Silverman & Van Tuom saw it on 3-28.

Bob & Johnny Dickson on 3-29.

Include size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern; details on shape or size of bill, wings, and tail. (Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions is not enough.) Describe what you actually saw in the field.

Bird was about 20" long; was the shape and size of a Mallard (or perhaps an inch shorter). Overall plumage (except as noted) very dark, nearly blackish-brown. Individual feathers of flanks, back & coverts were blackish brown with unmarked centers. Feather edges were very narrowly edged with lighter reddish brown. Sides of head, face & foreneck were much paler, slightly speckled, grayish-brown; this contrasted sharply with dark breast. Crown & hind-neck were blackish brown. There was a darker brown line on the face going through the eye. Feet & legs orangish-red. Bill greenish yellow with black nail & indistinct blackish line down culmen. The speculum was well seen - was dark blue with black fore-border & narrow black rear border. Speculum was very narrowly edged with white at rear border only. Underswing was easily white contrasting with black flanks, Rump, undertail & tail blackish. Tail indistinctly edged pale brown.

Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery - i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.:

Other noted call, I did not.

List similar species and how you eliminated them:

Female Black Duck lacks speculum. Only Mallard, Mottled & "Mex" Ducks are brown w/ blue speculum.

Mottled, "Mexican" and Mallard have flank & back feathers more broadly edged tan with tan central markings. None have plain blackish-brown plumage. Bill color (olive-yellow) and no white borders on speculum eliminate similar ducks.

This duck had no green-sheen on head; no reddish breast; no white borders on speculum; no white on tail. Appears pure Black Duck.

Prior experience with this and similar species:

I've seen Am. Black Duck, Mottled Duck & "Mex" Duck.

immediately after

This report was written from notes made during X after    observation; from memory   

NAME (print): Mark Janes

Mailing address: 907 Colorado Ave., La Junta CO 81050

Signature: Mark Janes

Return to:

Hugh E. Kingery  
869 Milwaukee Street  
Denver, Colorado 80206

DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD SIGHTINGS  
FOR  
THE COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS' RECORDS

A

Species: American Black Duck; Anas rubripes  
(Vernacular name) (Scientific name)

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We recognize that experienced field observers can provide important and reliable records, if supported by an adequate verifying description. Thus this request is an effort to perpetuate your record by obtaining concrete evidence which may be permanently preserved for examination by others in the future. This procedure is required for every extraordinary observation, irrespective of the observer.

Dates (s): March 28, 1990 Time Bird Seen: 2:15 PM to 2:30 PM

Locality: 3 Lee Lane, Pueblo, Pueblo County, Colorado

Nearest town, county and state:

Optical equipment: 10 x 40 Zeiss Binocular

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used: 35mm + Vivitar 280mm  
Enclosed Photo by Bob Steele Telephoto

Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: ♂ Plumage: Adult

Light conditions: Good

Distance from bird, and how measured: 30-40 feet estimated

Describe the bird's overall behavior: This bird flew into small pond & preferred company of Mallards. It swam after female Mallard but was often chased away by Mallard Drake. It always swam & fed on water's surface. The bird never did dive.

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird:

Small pond surrounded by dense deciduous trees  
near Arkansas River, in residential neighborhood.

Other observers who independently identified this bird (Please list name and address):

This bird was first observed by Bob Steele, 3 Lee Lane,

Pueblo, Colorado. It has subsequently been seen by many  
observers & still present at same location at the end of May, 1990.

APPENDIX II Continued

Describe in great detail the bird which you saw. Emphasize particularly the field marks used to identify the bird, but include a complete description of the bird. Include size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern; details on shape or size of bill, wings, and tail. (Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions is not enough). Describe what you actually saw in the field. This bird was about same size as Mallards but may be slightly larger. Its Face was pale brown with a narrow dark eye-line. Crown & nape darker than Face & Throat. Bill was solid light yellow except for narrow dark line on the entire length of culmen. Body was very dark chocolate brown & boldly contrasted with pale head, & neck. Breast, belly, & underparts were very dark brown. Tail was slightly lighter grayish brown & contrasted with blackish brown undertail coverts. Speculum was violet purple bordered with black lines. A thin light line could sometimes be seen on trailing edge of speculum. Underwing was whitish & contrasted with dark brown underparts.

Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery-- i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.:

I did not hear this bird

List similar species and how you eliminated them:  
Female Mallard has orange & not yellow beak, light body does not contrast with head color. Mallard has blue white bordered speculum unlike Black Duck's purple black bordered speculum. Mexican Mallard also has white bordered blue speculum & is lighter colored than Black Duck.  
Mottled Duck's look most like Black Duck but has a teal bluish-green & not a purple speculum. Its body is not as dark as Black Duck & also lacks blackish undertail coverts of Black Duck. Mottled Duck may lack dark line on culmen, but I'm uncertain if this field mark is diagnostic to separate it from Black Duck.  
Prior experience with this and similar species: Uncertain if this field mark is diagnostic to separate it from Black Duck.

I've seen Black Ducks several times in Missouri & Illinois, Mottled Ducks many times in Texas, & Mallards many times in many places.

This report was written from notes made during        after ✓ observation;  
from memory ✓.

Name (print) : David Silverman

Mailing address: P O Box 362 Rye, Co 81069

Signature: David Silverman

Return Form To:

CFO Records Committee  
c/o Curator--Zoological Collections  
Denver Museum of Natural History  
City Park  
Denver, CO 80205

xc: Hugh Kingery